

You can foster hope in a child.

A child who needs a foster family has faced many challenges in their young life. When you make the decision to open your heart and home and become a foster parent, you bring much needed love, guidance, and support to a child in need. It can be a demanding job, but the emotional and personal benefits can be fulfilling if you decide to make a difference and become a foster parent.

The need is clear.

The need for foster care in our state and throughout the country is growing dramatically. Young foster children come from every walk of life and range in age from infants to teenagers. They reflect the growing diversity of Idaho’s population and they all need the support of families that will provide them with guidance and a sense of belonging.

The number of foster families available to help is increasing, as well, but not nearly as fast as the population of children needing foster care. This is especially true for families who can support children with special needs, and Native American and Hispanic youth. It is also more difficult to find families interested in caring for older children, especially those in their teens.

Are you interested in becoming a foster parent?

The Department of Health and Welfare is interested in talking with qualified individuals or couples interested in becoming foster parents. You don’t need prior experience with parenting, and your current income only has to be enough to ensure the expenses of foster care don’t provide a hardship for the child or your family. There are a number of avenues available to obtain more information or set up an appointment with a regional foster care representative.

Detailed information about the foster care program, including success stories and fact sheets, can be found at www.idahochild.org. You can also call the Idaho CareLine at 211, where an operator will discuss your level of interest and send you additional materials. These resources also have contact information for regional representatives, who can assist with the licensing process or answer any questions that remain after you have reviewed the materials.

www.idahochild.org
Call 211



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Costs associated with this publication are available from the
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Foster Care

Open Your Heart & Home
BECOME A FOSTER PARENT



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE

Open your heart and home to a child.

Why children need caring foster families.

Children are generally placed in foster care when their families are unable, for one reason or another, to provide them with the basic level of safety and protection they require. Some of their stories are



difficult, with incidents of sexual or physical abuse, neglect, abandonment, and other serious family issues like substance abuse.

In many cases, foster care provides a temporary safe harbor while issues within the child's family are resolved. In other cases, a foster family may take care of a child for months or years and, over time, even take steps to formally adopt them. It's not always easy to be a foster parent, but when your guidance, love, and support make a difference, the rewards can be both humbling and extremely satisfying.

Who can become a foster parent?

Foster parents are couples or individuals who enjoy children and are willing to provide a safe, loving environment for youth who have suffered neglect or abuse. Idaho regulations require that every foster family have a valid Child Care License. This step helps ensure that every foster family or individual meets a standard for proper care and safety of the children in their care. You may qualify to become a foster parent if you:

- Are 21 years of age or older
- Have adequate space in your home for an additional child or children
- Have a home environment that will pass a health, fire, and safety inspection
- Have sufficient income to meet care requirements

Those who desire to become a foster family go through an evaluation of the safety of their home



environment and their suitability and skills to meet the needs of children who require foster care. A complete list of requirements and additional information can be found at

www.idahochild.org or by calling the Idaho CareLine at 211.

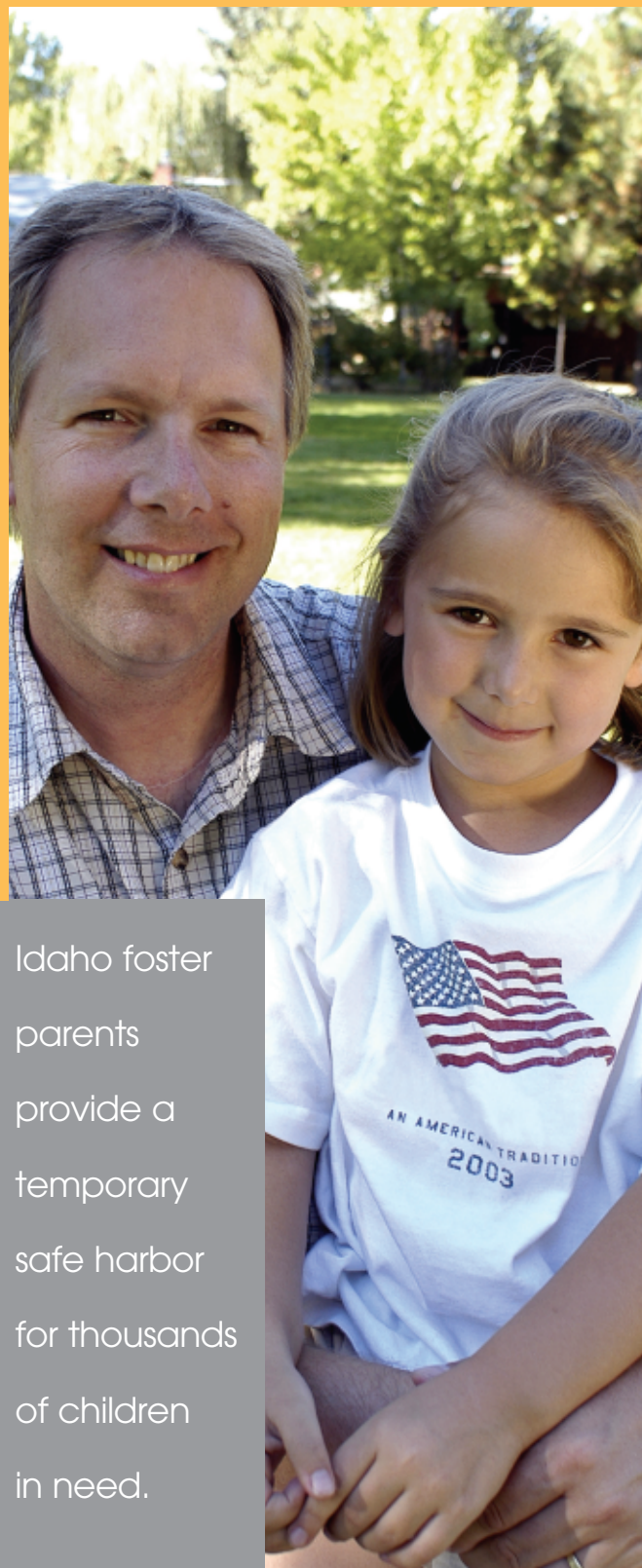
Support provided to foster families.

Every foster child has a social worker who works in concert with foster parents to help determine and meet the needs of children in foster care. There are also a variety of support groups, social activities, and training opportunities available for foster families.



Foster parents receive a monthly reimbursement

for each foster child in their care. The specific dollar amount is based on the child's age and needs. These payments cover child-care-related costs, such as food, clothing, and housing. The state also provides medical and dental coverage while children are in the foster care program.



Idaho foster parents provide a temporary safe harbor for thousands of children in need.